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NUTRITION COMMITTEE NEWS

For exchange of information on nutrition education and school lunch activities.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION INSTITUTE, DECEMBER 1952

WHAT THE SPEAKERS SAID

Some soundings from conference talks having special meaning for members of nutrition committees follow:

Nutrition and Health

Dr. R. M. Wilder, National Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases, USPHS. Frank vitamin and mineral nutritional deficiencies are rare in the United States today . . . in contrast to the situation which existed prior to the National Nutrition Conference in 1941. . . . A larger though indeterminable number of our adult population still suffers from so-called "subclinical" or borderline deficiencies.

Dr. W. H. Sebrell, Jr., National Institutes of Health, USPHS. In this country, marked declines in dietary deficiency diseases, such as pellagra and rickets, have saved not only the immediate costs of illness, but are now contributing to healthful, productive adulthood, and old age. . . . Maternal and infant deaths . . . have declined to unprecedented levels, a fact for which nutrition can take much credit. . . . Downward trends in mortality from infections, particularly tuberculosis . . . have accompanied the elevation of nutrition status. . . . Today children are usually taller and heavier than their parents were at that age, and thus get a better start toward healthy adulthood and long life.

Food Supplies and Consumption

Dr. J. D. Black, Harvard University. There need be little doubt about the ability of the agriculture of the United States to produce all the food that its people are going to be able to buy even with a continuously high level of employment.

Dr. F. V. Waugh, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, USDA. The increase in per capita food consumption since 1935-39 . . . was made possible by two factors . . . farmers produced 44 percent more food in 1952 than be-

During the first day and a half of the National Food and Nutrition Institute held in Washington, D. C., December 8-10, speakers discussed the present food and nutrition situation, reviewed the progress made in recent years—in some cases using the 1941 National Nutrition Conference as a bench mark from which to measure gain, and pointed up current problems.

Another day was given to discussion when the approximately 400 persons attending, in groups of about 25 each, exchanged ideas on the reports they had heard and considered how they would use in their work the information gained. The closing session featured a panel on coordination of nutrition activities.

An announcement will appear in *Nutrition Committee News* when copies of the proceedings become available for distribution.

TOWARD COMMON GOALS

Dr. Lydia J. Roberts, University of Puerto Rico, led off the panel on Coordination of Nutrition Activities by saying, "I think we have enough agencies, enough workers, and enough money to save the world nutritionally, if we could plan and work together toward common goals."

Some of the things the panel members said have been done, or are being done by their State nutrition committees to achieve this end are:

Teaching the Teachers

Study committees have been set up to find out whether teachers, doctors, dentists, and others who spread nutrition information could be helped by further in-service training in nutrition.

In-service training classes for teachers have been developed (later these were taken over by the Board of Education).

Workshops for nutrition workers have been sponsored or assisted.

(Continued on page 3)

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fore the war . . . consumers could afford to buy more food in spite of higher prices because their incomes were substantially larger than before the war, and because the distribution of incomes has become less unequal.

In terms of nutrients the average person is getting less carbohydrate than before the war, about the same amount of vitamin A, a little more ascorbic acid, and significantly more riboflavin, thiamine, niacin, iron, protein, and calcium.

Our food bills have increased not just because of higher prices, but also because we buy more food, food of better quality and relatively higher cost, and more marketing services with our food.

Dr. Esther F. Phipard, Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, USDA. We now consume more meats, poultry, eggs, dairy products, vegetables, and fruits than we did in the late thirties, but fewer potatoes and less grain products. . . . Our national diet today can be described as the kind people choose under relatively favorable circumstances of food supply and ability to buy food. . . . Calories per person per day in the national food supply have declined in a 40-year period from an average of 3,450 to 3,250 . . . at the retail stage of distribution. . . . The steady increase in the share of the total calories derived from fat is . . . an important characteristic of our present-day diet. . . .

G. E. Hilbert, Bureau of Agricultural and Industrial Chemistry, USDA. . . . Good reason to regard the major trends [in food processing] as beneficial . . . perishable foods are processed and stabilized within a few hours at most after they are harvested . . . [growers] harvest the crop at optimum maturity . . . raw material and finished products are kept under constant surveillance by Federal-State inspectors . . . technically trained, quality-control men [are] in the plants. . . .

The great selling point of the new frozen foods was that they brought to the home kitchen essentially fresh fish or berries or peas, out of season and a thousand miles from producing areas . . . when producers bound themselves to this standard they also automatically set themselves to preserve the nutritive value of the fresh produce. . . .

Orange juice concentrate . . . [utilizes] more of the Florida orange crop than is shipped as fresh fruit, and per capita consumption is rising steadily.

. . . Expanding use of food concentrates . . . vacuum de-aeration, efficient low-temperature concentration, and highly effective heat exchangers which make it possible to heat, concentrate, and cool delicate food products in the space of a few seconds.

. . . powerful forces are assuring our people of a better food supply than the world has ever known . . . joint efforts of scientists, farmers, technologists, and industrialists.

Family Diets

Dr. E. F. Phipard. Family dietary surveys . . . are important for nutrition programs because they make it possible to identify . . . those groups that have the poorest diets, or the best. . . . The enrichment program has had more effect on the diets of low-income families than on those higher in the income scale . . . bread and flour are a larger share of the diets at lower income levels. . . . Lack of money is not the only reason why family diets fall short of recommendations. . . . Larger families are especially in need of assistance in planning good diets within the limits of the money they spend for food. . . . In rural areas, the kinds and amounts of home food production seem especially influential—more so than regional food habits—in determining the dietary level. . . . Among city families . . . knowledge makes a difference in the nutritive quality of diets. . . . The proportion of family diets that provided NRC recommended allowances for each of six nutrients . . . shows that the more formal education the homemaker had, the greater the chance that the family diet measured up to recommendations.

Nutrition of Infant and Child

Dr. Genevieve Stearns, University of Iowa. The overfat babies of the condensed milk era have given way to the alert wiry youngster fed more protein and less carbohydrate. One of the chief concerns at present is overdosage of infants with vitamins, particularly A and D, which cannot be excreted and are broken down in the body slowly. . . . Good nutrition of pregnant mothers will cut the mortality among newborn infants far more than the best care of the prematurely born can ever accomplish. . . .

In order to assure the birth of healthy infants, carried to term, the mother's diet should be nutritionally adequate from early childhood so that she enters pregnancy with a full store of nutritional essentials. . . . A young woman entering pregnancy after years of malnutrition, that is, a diet adequate in calories but low in many nutritional essentials, cannot possibly nourish her fetus well in the critical first 2 months of development in utero. . . . The school-age child is exposed to many infections; it appears that good protein nutrition increases the resistance of the child to infection.

Food Habits

Dr. W. H. Sebrell, Jr. It is now known that dietary patterns, although often firmly rooted in culture, undergo continual change and may be gradually modified through education, especially of children.

Dr. C. G. King, The Nutrition Foundation, Inc., and Columbia University. . . . Our food and nutrition prob-

lems cannot be solved unless people learn to use their food supplies intelligently. . . . [It is] in the public interest to begin to educate children to adopt sound principles of nutrition very early in life . . . begin with kindergarten children. . . . The program should . . . be continually developed within the normal framework of teaching, without attempting to develop specialized courses. . . .

Dr. R. J. Anderson, Public Health Service, FSA. Eating habits, once established, are hard to change. And probably the solution lies in not attempting drastic changes but modifications to fit the diet into the lifetime eating habits of individuals.

Dr. Edward J. Stieglitz, Consultant in Geriatrics to Veterans Administration and St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Habits . . . may be transmitted from one generation to the next. . . . The child who grows up in a family where parents are obese by reason of overeating acquires the habit of eating excessively.

Obesity

Dr. R. J. Anderson. In the past the great task of nutrition has been to build up eating patterns to meet the recommended dietary allowances . . . we may be coming to a time when this emphasis must be broadened. Perhaps not only lack of food or of certain food constituents is undesirable. It may well be that too much food or too much of certain food elements may be causative or predisposing to disease. The association of overweight with chronic illness is well accepted. (See January NCN for further discussion of obesity.)

Food and Nutrition Information

C. W. Crawford, Food and Drug Administration, FSA. . . . American public . . . not sufficiently informed to gain full advantage of the achievements of science and technology in the fields of nutrition and agriculture, food processing, and marketing . . . fertile field for new form of quackery. . . . A vast new folklore of nutrition is being built by distorting the facts of the real advantages of nutrition science. . . . Speculative theories reported to scientific groups are stated to the purchasing public as facts; facts are half stated and become half truths. . . . In the field of nutrition the layman is all too frequently at a loss to know where to go for sound information. . . . Nutrition education should always emphasize the distinction between known facts and speculations.

Dr. R. J. Anderson. The nutritionist, who combines a knowledge of food and its effect in health and disease with an ability to teach and to persuade and to motivate people to use this knowledge, is an important member of the [U. S. Public Health Service] chronic disease team.

Consumer Protection

C. W. Crawford. In all our scientific writings we should try to choose expressions of such accuracy and clarity that they will not lend themselves to easy distortion for the promotion of nostrums.

Food and Peace

Dr. W. H. Sebrell, Jr. As the leading nation in food science and technology, we must develop our nutrition programs in full recognition of the food problems of other countries. . . . For investment in nutrition offers a substantial hope for world prosperity and peace.

TOWARD COMMON GOALS

(Continued from page 1)

Reaching the People

Press, radio, television, and personal talks have been used as means of giving facts about nutrition. Transcripts of radio programs have been made to make it possible to use them in different places at different times.

Annual Nutrition Weeks have been organized that were made an official observance by the Mayor's proclamation.

Advising on State and Local Problems

Civil service classifications and salaries for public health nutritionists, home economists, and dietitians have been surveyed and recommendations for their improvements made. Help in writing specifications for food served in public institutions has been given.

A plan for supplying food to unemployed agricultural workers was recommended to a Governor and then carried out.

The importance of improving the quality of the food supply has been brought to the attention of legislators, consumers, producers, and others.

Undertakings of local nutrition committees have been supported and encouraged by State committees.

Cooperating on Civil Defense

State nutrition committees have advised and cooperated with civil defense organizations.

Guiding principles and plans for emergency feeding have been developed.

Rosters of personnel able to staff feeding stations have been set up.

Training manuals for personnel in feeding stations have been prepared.

Furthering the School Lunch Program

Subcommittees on school lunch have been organized to support and aid the program as necessary.

School board members have been encouraged to serve on school lunch committees.

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS FOR GOOD NUTRITION

After studying food habits in their States, many nutrition committees urge greater consumption of fruits and vegetables (both home and commercially grown) to raise the intake of minerals and vitamins which are frequently low in diets.

The committees have encouraged home gardens because studies show that people who grow vegetables and fruits tend to eat more of them, even when they have to buy them after their home-grown supply runs out.

Family food production plans have been developed in many States. These usually stress green and yellow vegetables and tomatoes, and show families the foods that give the greatest nutritive return for the time, labor, and garden space.

Emphasis is also placed on using the entire growing sea-

Making Use of Research Findings

Results of surveys and other data on health, diets, food, and nutritional status have been studied as a basis for programs of work.

In the South, this can mean year-round planting, especially for greens. In the middle belt, early spring and late fall as well as summer can be used advantageously. Information about gardening and the national garden program can be secured from State Extension Services, Farmers Home Administration, and other agricultural agencies.

An expanded educational program in proper preparation and use of vegetables and fruits is one of the objectives of the national garden program recommended by the advisory committee of national garden leaders.

Directions for preparing fruits and vegetables for table use as well as for freezing and canning are given in the publications listed under Materials. Although many of them are not new, they are listed in this issue for the convenience of readers.

MATERIALS

Listing of these materials is for information of readers and does not necessarily mean recommendation. The publications listed below may be obtained from the addresses given after the name of the publication. The symbols, for example, INF, refer to—

INF—Office of Information, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.

EXT—Extension Service, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.

REA—Rural Electrification Administration, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.

PMA—Office of Information Services, Production and Marketing Administration, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.

Home Preservation of Fruits and Vegetables

FREEZING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. BHNHE, USDA. 16mm. color, sound film. 15 min. Borrow from State agricultural extension service or State university film libraries, or purchase from Castle Films, Inc., 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, for about \$91.

HOME FREEZERS, THEIR SELECTION AND USE. Misc. Pub. 687. 1949. INF.

HOME FREEZING OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. H & G Bul. 10. 1951. INF.

PLAN YOUR PLANTING FOR YOUR FREEZER. Processed. 1952. REA.

COLD FACTS. Processed. 1952. REA.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR HOME FREEZER STOPS. Leaflet 321. 1952. EXT.

HANDLING AND JUDGING FROZEN FOODS AT FAIRS. Processed. 1952. EXT.

HOME CANNING OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. H & G Bul. 8. 1947. INF.

MAKING VELVA FRUIT AT HOME. AIS 22. 1945. INF.

HOME-MADE JELLIES, JAMS, AND PRESERVES. Farmers' Bul. 1800. 1945. INF.

PICKLE AND RELISH RECIPES. Leaflet 269. 1950. INF.

CANNING IN GLASS JARS IN SCHOOL AND INSTITUTIONAL KITCHENS: FRUITS AND OTHER ACID FOODS. Agr. Handb. 11. 1951. PMA.

Preparing Fruits and Vegetables for the Table

FAMILY FARE. H & G Bul. 1. 1950. Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. 25¢.

TOMATOES ON YOUR TABLE. Leaflet 278. 1950. INF.

APPLES IN APPEALING WAYS. Leaflet 312. 1951. INF.

RECIPES FOR EVAPORATED APPLE RINGS. Leaflet 263. 1950. INF.

DRY BEANS, PEAS, LENTILS—MODERN COOKERY. Leaflet 326. 1952. INF.

POTATOES IN POPULAR WAYS. Leaflet 295. 1944. INF.

ROOT VEGETABLES IN EVERYDAY MEALS. Leaflet 294. 1950. INF.

SWEETPOTATO RECIPES. Leaflet 293. 1946. INF.

TOMATOES ON YOUR TABLE. Leaflet 278. 1950. INF.

GREEN VEGETABLES IN EVERYDAY MEALS. Leaflet 272. 1950. INF.

COOKING FRESH VEGETABLES FOR THE SCHOOL LUNCH. Processed. 1951. From State Departments of Education, School Lunch Division.

A FRUIT AND VEGETABLE BUYING GUIDE FOR CONSUMERS. H & G Bul. 21. 1952. PMA.